

MHawaii MARINE

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Artillery battalion trades steel rain for hearts, minds

Cpl. Rick Nelson
Combat Correspondent

HADITHAH, Iraq — The counter-insurgency coalition forces are conducting in Iraq calls for numerous military units to give up their traditional roles and pick up a different weapon. This is nothing new for artillery units, who, since the Battle of Fallujah in November of 2004, have often been called upon to put away their howitzers for rifles, police batons and claims cards. All around Iraq, artillery batteries and battalions are serving as provisional rifle, military police and

civil military units. In Hadithah, it's no different.

At the Hadithah Civil Military Operations Center, Marines assigned to 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, an artillery battalion based out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., assist the local populace with their civil matters.

"This was a big change from our usual duties as a field artillery battalion," said Cpl. Russell Mullis, Civil Affairs Group, Team 1, Detachment 1, 5/10. "Steel rain and hearts and minds are two entirely different missions, but we're adapting very well."



Cpl. Rick Nelson
Corporal Russel Mullis, a Marine with the Civil Affairs Group detachment assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, hands out paperwork to local nationals at the Civil Military Operations Center in Hadithah.

Until this year, CAG detachments were primarily staffed by reservists. This is the first year an artillery unit has civil affairs as their primary mission.

"We serve as a liaison between the local populace and the coalition forces," Mullis said. "We handle any claims and concerns from the popu-

lace and process projects to rebuild the area."

Civil Affairs Group, Team 1, Detachment 1, 5/10 is a part of Task Force 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment which falls under Regimental Combat Team 2. These Marines operate the CMOC and patrol Hadithah to conduct assess-

ments and coordinate with local contractors.

"The Marines run two different missions, CMOC and civil affairs," said Warrant Officer Harold Kiser, officer-in-charge, CAG. "Our areas of concern and focus form the

See ARTILLERY, A-4

Hawaii Marine awarded Bronze Star



Lance Cpl. Ashley S. Hoffman
First Sgt. Jeffrey A. Dixon, Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, Task Force Military Police first sergeant, congratulates 1st Lt. Benjamin N. Preston, platoon commander, 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1/12 TFMP. Preston was awarded the Bronze Star for his actions in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lance Cpl. Thomas Lew
1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment

AL ASAD, Iraq — One of the Marines' Hymn verses is, "We have fought in every clime and place where we could take a gun." How true it is for 1st Lt. Benjamin N. Preston, a former team-leader advisor with Embedded Training Team 2-3. Preston carried the fight into the mountains of Afghanistan and into the spirits of the Afghan soldiers.

For his actions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Preston was awarded the Bronze Star.

According to the citation, Preston excelled as a team leader and mentor to the company commander of 1st

Company, 2nd Kandaq, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps of the Afghan National Army. He displayed an innate ability to instill efficient processes, provide expert advice and developed a professional ethos for his ANA counterparts while serving as an embedded training team mentor of Task Force Phoenix.

Preston both trained and operated with Afghan soldiers every day. He lived among them and conducted joint patrols along the Afghan-Pakistani border in the Paktika province.

He also oversaw the completion of a border security observation post and went on more than 100 joint combat patrols. They discovered

weapons caches consisting of fifty 107mm rockets and four improvised explosive devices.

"Over the course of the year, they (2/1/203) developed the proficiency to conduct independent patrols across the province," Preston said.

Preston, from Kennewick, Wash., is currently deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, Task Force Military Police.

Lieutenant Col. Stephen A. Liszewski, the battalion commander for 1/12 TFMP, said Preston is a credit to any unit he serves, and he hopes it rubs off on his Marines.

See AWARD, A-4

IEDs threaten more than the front lines

Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

CAMP H. M. SMITH, Hawaii — The Marines at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific conducted bomb threat procedures when a suspicious package was identified in the mail room last month.

The incident forced leaders to reevaluate the knowledge and understanding their Marines have about the procedures to properly identify bomb threats.

A hoax bomb was placed in a package and mailed to a high ranking official. It was filled with computer parts rigged to look like a possible detonation device. Upon inspection, Marines with Explosives Ordnance Disposal determined the threat to be a hoax, according to Master Sgt. C.T. Gregoire.

The procedures for reporting and handling a potential threat are fairly simple, according to EOD experts.

If a Marine identifies something as a threat, they should clear the area, stay calm and call the Provost Marshal's Office, said Staff Sgt. Jeb Addel, EOD technician, here.

When determining a threat, especially when dealing with packages, there are a few key identifiers to look out for: oily or irregular stains, protruding wires, misspelled names and addresses, no return or simple ambiguous addresses. Anything, even an unattended backpack could be a possible threat.

Plaque attacked at new base dental annex

Christine Cabalo
Photojournalist

Marines and Sailors can sink their teeth into a new way of seeing a dentist here.

A new base dental annex, dedicated today by Brig. Gen. Steven Hummer, commanding general, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, offers another option for service members needing a checkup.

"The annex is really a Band-Aid," said Navy Capt. Gregory Kvaska, officer-in-charge and company commander, 21st Dental Company. "It isn't a final solution. The only way to meet our needs is to build a new facility that's the right size, but that solution is 10 years away. We needed something right now."

Opened June 4 for trial runs, the new facility supports general exams, patient X-rays, and its staffers can make recommendations for specialty work. Marines and Sailors will still need to go

to the main dental clinic for oral surgery or fitting crowns.

"It's a centralized location for our biggest customer," said Chief Petty Officer Eugenio Miranda, administration supervisor, 21st Dental Company. "They won't have to walk from their place to the dental clinic."

Located near Anderson Hall in Building 4028, the annex is a 15-minute walk for Marines living in nearby barracks. Kvaska said the annex is meant to be "high speed, low glide" as a convenient place for service members to be treated.

The annex operates in a space owned by the Corps. The Navy Medical West board provided \$200,000 to fund the basic facility. The administration supervisor said costs were minimized through internal company efforts, such as painting the new facility on their own.

The 21st Dental Co. commander said having an annex allows patients to



Christine Cabalo
Lieutenant Cmdr. James Thompson, annex officer-in-charge, 21st Dental Company treats Lance Cpl. David La Rose, rifleman, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. Thompson checks for cavities at the new dental annex aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. He said the annex will initially treat patients from returning units such as 2/3.

receive the care they need in a shorter period. He said an annual 15-minute exam could take a service member two to three hours to reach the main dental clinic and wait for their appointment. The closer location means Marine commands may save as many as 6,000 work

hours yearly.

The main dental clinic, built in 1982, has half of the resources Kvaska said are needed to care for the 9,000 Sailors and Marines his company treats.

See DENTAL, A-4

See FRONT, A-4

NEWS BRIEFS

Interactive Customer Evaluation

The Interactive Customer Evaluation is providing customers with a convenient and efficient method to express opinions to service providers and receive feedback. The services will also be available to obtain pertinent information i.e. hours of operation, location, frequently asked questions and special events.

We want to know how Marine Corps Base Hawaii services are doing at: <http://ice.disa.mil>. Click on the Marine Corps and Pacific, which lead you to the MCBH community and Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay

For questions, contact the ICE manager at 257-1283.

New E-mail Scam Targets USAA Members

USAA is investigating a new phishing scam that attempts to collect members' sensitive information.

Members have received a recent e-mail claiming to be from USAA that urges them to complete a "USAA Online Client Form." The e-mail directs members to a counterfeit Web site that aims to trick them into providing account information.

USAA will not ask for personal or account information in an e-mail. If you are suspicious about any e-mails or Web sites claiming to be from USAA, please notify them immediately at 1-877-632-3002.

Recruiter Screening Team Visit

The Headquarters Marine Corps Recruiter Screening Team is scheduled to visit the base to screen Marines July 30 and 31.

All corporals, sergeants, staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants need to contact their unit Career Retention Specialist and find out if they are on the list to be screened by the HRST.

The HRST will provide a brief at 8 a.m. July 30. The briefing is mandatory for all Marines that are on the list to be screened. Spouses are highly encouraged to attend.

Information Needed by MCBH K-Bay Military Police Traffic Division

On May 30 around 9:45 p.m. at the intersection of Lawrence Road and South Lawrence Road an unknown vehicle struck a pedestrian walking on the side of the roadway. The driver then fled the scene without rendering aid or notifying the proper authorities.

The Traffic Division is requesting anyone having information which might assist in the investigation to contact the Duty Accident Investigator.

Contact the Traffic Division at 257-1146 or the Military Police Desk Sergeant at 257-2123.

Weekly Legal Brief

A new weekly brief to aid Marines, Sailors and civilian personnel on Wills and Powers of Attorney will be held at the Legal Services Center, Legal Assistance Office, Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Also included are some important tips on Wills and Powers of Attorney.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

Hawaii MARINE

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Memories of a young Marine



Pfc. Brian A. Marion
Combat Correspondent

Boot camp is something every Marine has in common. I'm sure we all remember our drill instructors yelling at us, sending us to the quarterdeck and to the pit.

Ahhh yes, the good old days. For some, those days are in the distant past. But, we all remember them. Those boot camp memories often remind us why we wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor.

I still remember the first day of the Crucible. I was lucky because I was assigned to my "kill hat" drill instructor. He took us to a secluded area where we told the others about ourselves.

When we were finished, our drill instructor told us his story. He began with how he started his career as a mortarman. He told us about when he joined the Corps and his marriage.

He told us about his life, so that we'd begin to look at him as another human being rather than a machine. It gave me something to look forward to outside of boot camp.

I also remember an incident on our deck. After the Crucible, the other recruits and I were sitting on our deck eating box chows with our "kill hat" watching us. Two recruits from another deck came in through the back hatch.

There was something different about the back hatch. It required a special "touch" (it used to stick, so you'd have to shove the

door release beam for it to catch) in order for it to open.

The recruits did something wrong because our drill instructor gave them 10 seconds to get from the senior drill instructor's house to the hatch. They sprinted toward it thinking it'd open easily. As chance, or luck, would have it, when they reached the hatch our drill instructor reached "one" on the countdown. The first recruit hit the door going from full sprint to a dead stop in a second. The second recruit followed closely behind, running into the back of him.

My whole platoon burst into laughter, a brief lapse in bearing. The drill instructor even had to go into the house to keep his bearing. The recruits eventually got the door open and headed back to their squad bay. And we were yelled at for laughing, but it was worth it.

Memories like those make boot camp worth it, and I wouldn't trade them for anything. These memories make me who I am today and will always be a part of me.

Memories make us who we are. Without them, a lot would be lost. When we're gone, our legacy depends on the memory of others. Will they remember you?

Passing of the Colors



Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Lieutenant Col. James E. Donnellan (right) passes the colors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, to Lt. Col. Max A. Galeai during a change of command ceremony June 14 at Dewey Square. Galeai is coming to Hawaii from Okinawa, Japan, where he served as the future operations and exercises officer for 3rd Marine Division. Donnellan will head to Rhode Island to attend an advanced infantry leadership course at the Naval War College.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 83. East wind between 11 and 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 76. East wind around 11 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

High — 83

Low — 76

Saturday



Day — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 83. East wind between 11 and 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 75. East wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

High — 83

Low — 75

Sunday



Day — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 83. East wind around 11 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 76. East wind around 11 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

High — 83

Low — 76



A Marine fires an M-9 service pistol at the Puuloa Pistol Range Saturday. Pistol qualifications were one of many annual training requirements 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment went through during their two-week stay.

Reserve unit conducts training

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Brian A. Marion

Combat Correspondent

Service members with 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment conducted their annual training here for the last two weeks.

The battalion staff decided to try something different this year and consolidate their resources into their annual training period.

“We were able to complete all eight annual training requirements during this period instead of having all the corpsmen and instructors travel to all the units’ bases,” said Maj. Steven D. Bickford, inspector-instructor, Lima Company, 3/24. “We also wanted the training to be held on a Marine base, and K-Bay was the logical choice.”

They began training at 6 a.m. and didn’t stop until 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. The unit completed swim qualifications, rifle and pistol qualifications, the gas chamber, first aid, leadership courses and tra-

umatic combat casualty courses.

The unit was split into two halves; each half completed a section of training that lasted for five days. One section consisted of training that could be conducted here, and the other section consisted of three days of training at Puuloa Rifle Range and two days at Schofield Barracks for Basic Urban Skills Training.

Shipping the unit here for training was costly, according to Bickford, but he hopes it’ll be worth it in the end.

The units will have more training time at their respective bases, allowing the battalion staff to work toward unit cohesion, Bickford said.

The training here gave the Marines the opportunity to do something they never would’ve done, Bickford said.

“This is a nice base that is good for training,” said Lance Cpl. Jonathan Grimshaw, with Lima Co., 3/24. “It’s beautiful down here and it has nice weather. When I heard we were going to train



Marines with Lima Company, 3/24, fire pistols during practice for their pistol qualifications on Fox Range at Puuloa Pistol Range Saturday. The Battalion completed eight annual training requirements during their two-week training schedule.

down here, I was smiling from ear to ear for about a week. It takes more to get used to, because I am not used to the stress or frequency of the training, but it’s good training.”

Not only did the battalion receive training, but they were also given the opportunity to get their dental and medical requirements completed.

“Most of the Marines have to provide their own medical and dental the days when they are not in uniform, so training down here also gave them the opportunity to get that done,” Bickford said.

“The whole base has been helpful. Third Marines jumped in to help with our training, and CSSG helped by providing vehicles and MRE’s. It’s a good example of Marines helping out their fellow Marines.”



Sergeant Jason Brice, Headquarters and Service Company, 3/24, practices a vertical hammerfist strike during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training at Landing Zone Boondocker May 13. The Marines went through more than 10 hours of sustainment training for both tan and grey belts during the five days they were here.



Sergeant Alexander Yadloczky, chief instructor at Puuloa range, instructs the Marines of 3/24 on how to properly fire a pistol Saturday at Puuloa. The reserve battalion completed both rifle and pistol qualifications during their annual training requirements.

ARTILLERY, from A-1

acronym SWEATS – schools, water, electricity, agriculture, transportation and sewage.”

The center conducts many daily tasks for the local nationals, which includes vehicle registration and badge distribution. CAG also compensates the locals for any damages inadvertently caused by military personnel during counter-insurgency operations.

“The sheer number of people who come through everyday is our biggest challenge,” said Mullis, from Winston-Salem, N.C.

On average, the CMOC will assist approximately 150 people a day. The largest number of local nationals serviced in one day was 220.

CAG compensates for this number by issuing the local national a specific number after they’ve been searched at the entrance. This number puts them in a line to air their grievances and receive help. The team uses interpreters to overcome the language barrier.

“Our main problem here is a shortage of interpreters, but the ones we do have do a great job,” Mullis said.

Once a number is selected, an interpreter will speak with that person and determine how they can be helped.

After speaking with the interpreter, the Marines will cater to the local national’s problem based on the situation.

Mullis recalled one such



Cpl. Rick Nelson

Lance Cpl. David W. Adkins, a Marine with the CAG detachment assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, takes a picture of a local national at the CMOC May 31.

incident that occurred at the CMOC.

“A local national was driving his dump truck through a [traffic control point] in Haqlaniyah and misunderstood the Marines working there, and he went the wrong way,” Mullis said. “The way he went had road spikes, and he ended up destroying two of his tires.”

The driver was issued a claims card. When he arrived at the CMOC, he was given 381,500 dinar (\$299.92 in American money).

“We searched through vendors to see what an average price was on the tires, which is how we came up with the

amount,” he added. “That’s the usual way we complete our claims, and it seems to be working.”

This CMOC is another facet to the complex environment, and it’s something the CAG Marines know is vital to mission success.

“The CMOC provides a place for local nationals to interact with coalition forces, and without it, I think there would be a lot more friction with the people,” Mullis said.

Marines assigned to the CAG detachment continue to help the locals here and support the Lava Dogs of 1/3 in order to aid their counter-insurgency campaign.

DENTAL, from A-1

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment were the first scheduled to come in after their recent deployment for examinations.

“So far we’ve been doing really well,” said Lt. Cmdr. James Thompson, dental annex officer-in-charge, 21st Dental Co. “Our trial runs have worked out nicely with the Marines we’ve seen so far.”

The next step for the 21st Dental Co. will be outfitting a mobile dental van, Kvaska said. The company commander said the mobile unit functions just as the annex does, and patients

can have X-rays taken or their teeth cleaned. The van, provided by 3rd Dental Battalion, is scheduled to arrive in July from Japan.

“Rather than send 100 people to the clinic – we could park the dental van in the hangar bay,” he said. “Personnel can come right from their workstation to get examined, and then they can go back to their desk.”

Kvaska said the new resources are available to maintain as high a level of dental readiness as commands want to have.

“There are a lot of teeth in 9,000 people,” Kvaska said. “Our motto is ‘You can’t fight if you can’t bite.’”

FRONT, from A-1

According to Addel and Gregoire, each time a threat is realized, the individual must err on the side of caution while still using common sense.

“If you can not tell me that that package is not going to explode, you need to take every precaution,” Gregoire said.

Bomb threats don’t just

come through the mail, some come through the telephone.

“These threats can come through any extension at any time,” Gregoire said. “That is why anyone who answers phones around here should have a bomb data card near their phone.”

The bomb data cards, which every office is required to have, contain a list of questions used to ascertain as much information from the

caller as possible. The card also has a checklist that will later help officials determine where, when and who made the threat.

“People should read and learn their procedures and use common sense to identify potential threats,” Gregoire said. “To do this a person needs to be aware, not paranoid, but have a sense of awareness about them.”

Welcome home snack



Christine Cabalo

Taking chips and a can of Hawaiian juice, Maj. Steve Brzostowski, executive officer, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, and his children enjoy a post-flight snack. He was one of 40 Marines returning June 14 from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma. Brzostowski took part in training for desert deployments with his squadron at the air station.

AWARD, from A-1

“Anytime a Marine or Sailor is awarded the Bronze Star, it truly says that he’s done something special,” Liszewski said. “We could all probably learn a lesson from him. He’s got the right attitude and the right outlook.”

Looking back on his experiences with his counterparts, Preston gained a newfound respect for the Afghan soldiers.

“This is a credit to the hardworking Afghan soldiers who brought the fight to the anti-coalition militia who are threatening their country,” he said. “I’d go back to Afghanistan and serve with the ANA any day.”



Lance Cpl. Ashley S. Hoffman

Lieutenant Col. Stephen E. Liszewski, the 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, Task Force Military Police commanding officer, presents the Bronze Star to 1st Lt. Benjamin N. Preston, the platoon commander of 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1/12 TFMP. The ceremony, which took place here recently, was for his actions in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Off-roading leaves land off-track

Christine Cabalo

Photojournalist

Gordon Olayvar leads a lonely path at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Olayvar patrols restricted base areas, ensuring vehicles keep from damaging natural resources. Off-roading, or riding on unpaved terrain, is illegal on base.

"There's only one designated off-road area on Oahu," said Olayvar, program manager, Federal Conservation Law Enforcement, Base Environmental Department. "That's the Kahuku Motocross near North Shore."

Mountain bikes, four-wheel drive vehicles and ATVs wreak environmental havoc on protected areas, he said. The program manager finds violators driving into off-limit base areas near Kailua Bay, Pyramid Rock and Fort Hase Beach. It may not be frequent, but when illegal off-roading does occur it's permanently devastating, Olayvar said.

The devastating effects can damage the land, according to Lance Bookless, natural resource specialist, Base Environmental Department. The natural resource specialist said off-roading wears down terrain and vegetation keeping soil in its place. He's seen coastal plants and grass ripped apart from speeding off-road vehicles treading on the ground.

Gated restricted areas near Pyramid Rock include graves from service members killed during the 1941 attacks against Kaneohe Naval Air Station. The area is federally protected, and off-roaders recreating in the area can expose their remains.

Bookless said land erosion results in smaller beaches and a less stable environment for coastal animals. Vehicles driven through the restricted space threaten federally protected wildlife,

such as the Wedge-tailed Shearwater bird.

The seabird uses vegetation near the ocean to make burrows for shelter and to store its young. Birds can be crushed or buried alive by illegal off-roaders near the bay.

"Illegal off-roading is a nonjudicial punishable offense," Bookless said. "Anyone breaking the law may also have their vehicles towed away."

Civil and criminal charges can be leveled against illegal off-roaders for harm done by their vehicles. Illegal off-roaders can be charged with trespassing, and drivers can be fined for amounts starting at \$50. Higher towing fees may apply if vehicles are stuck inside pits, costing an additional \$250.

"The bigger problem is service members going off base with their four-wheel drive vehicles," Bookless said. "There aren't a lot of places established on the island where off-roading is legal."

Illegal off-roading from service members and other four-wheel drive enthusiasts cause damage in protected stretches of wilderness on the island. Olayvar conducts raids island-wide, including Waikane Valley in Windward Oahu and Mokuleia on the western side of the island. Near the base in Waikane Valley, the program manager said he's found more than a dozen trespassers at a time off-roading and wrecking the natural terrain.

Four-wheel drive vehicles are permitted to off-road at Kahuku Motocross, and there are developments for multi-recreational vehicle parks in Sand Island near Honolulu.

A legal unpaved path in Mokuleia can be traveled on to the Peacock Flats campsite with a permit from the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Drivers may only



Christine Cabalo

Gordon Olayvar, program manager, Federal Conservation Law Enforcement, Base Environmental Department, examines tracks made by four-wheel drive vehicles near Fort Hase Beach. The program manager said sand is lost whenever vehicles illegally drive through the beach. Trucks and ATVs are not allowed on the beach according to Olayvar.

stick to the established path beginning at Kaena Point Satellite Tracking Station Road. Deviations from the trail are illegal.

With one main venue rugged off-roading, Olayvar said off-roaders must be more aware of what is illegal

and to contact the authorities if they have questions about the law.

"People want to go to the wilderness," Olayvar said. "But the off-roaders unintentionally destroy what they're enjoying when they do it in places they shouldn't."

Takin' the hill one last time



Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree

Lieutenant Col. James E. Donnellan, commanding officer, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, leads his Marines to the top of Kansas Tower June 14. Donnellan led his battalion for one last battalion run around the base and up the hill before he relinquished command of 2/3.

AROUND THE CORPS

WTOT hosts dinner

Lance Cpl. James Green

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego

MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO — Three years ago, a man by the name of Bob Zimmerman, better known as “Bobby Z,” created the “We Thank Our Troops” organization in order to make wounded Marines returning from the War on Terrorism better cope with their injuries.

On June 6, the organization’s third anniversary, WTOT hosted a dinner at the Casa Guadalajara in Old Town, San Diego, in honor of their first get together at the same location.

“I host events like this to put smiles on their faces,” said Zimmerman as he spoke about the Marines. “After meeting all the Marines and being around them for a while, they become

family. The best way I can describe it is like being a father with 45 kids.”

Zimmerman said his motivation behind hosting these events is knowing that the Marines will never come home to the same treatment that the service members in the Vietnam War faced. He said by putting smiles on their faces and laughter in their lives, they can forget about their injuries for a while, even if it is just a short time.

“It’s nice to get out of the barracks and not have to look at what happened to you, or worry about your medical condition for a while,” said Sgt. Chad Carter, a Marine with the Medical Hold platoon at Naval Medical Center San Diego. He broke his back in Iraq nearly three years ago. “It’s nice to know that people like Bob still exist



Lance Cpl. James Green

Bob Zimmerman raffles off a T-shirt for Wounded Warriors during an annual dinner at the Casa Guadalajara restaurant in Old Town, June 6.

and really care about how we feel.”

Carter, a native of Williamsburg, Iowa, said barracks life can be mentally and physically draining. He enjoys anything that gets him

away from the day-to-day routine at the hospital, and appreciates the fact America is still “for the troops.”

The Marines of Wounded Warrior Platoon all agree America can use more people like Zimmerman.

“Bob is one of those people who would do anything for the troops,” Carter said. “He puts in his time and effort to make sure we are okay and always put the Marines before himself.”

Zimmerman, from Seneca, Penn., hosts events such as dinner cruises, concerts, Christmas parties and other outings several times a year at no cost to the Marines.

He said he truly appreciates the sacrifices these young men and women have made and this is his way of giving back.

The dinner marked three years of thanking troops and opened a door for many more to come. For more information on the WTOT organization, visit www.wtot.org.